

INCLUDING FINNIGIN



STRICKLAND W. GILLILAN



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INCLUDING FINNIGIN

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

INCLUDING YOU AND ME
A SAMPLE CASE OF HUMOR
SUNSHINE AND AWKWARDNESS

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INCLUDING FINNIGIN

A BOOK OF GILLILAN VERSE

BY

STRICKLAND W. GILLILAN



202951


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FORBES & COMPANY
1919

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U. S.
MARSH
NAT. OVON

LOVINGLY DEDICATED
TO MY WIFE
HARRIET NETTLETON GILLILAN



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PREFATORY SOLILOQUY

I do not know why I publish this volume. True, many people have said they wanted copies of my stuff, but they were charitably lying about it, God bless them, and didn't deceive me for a moment. I'm only glad they thought so much of my temporary joy as to purchase it for me at the price of their own souls' jeopardy.

The bell-wether, as it were, of this huddle of strays, is the "Finnigin" story, which opened to me the door to opportunity, both in the periodicals and on the platform. The fact of its having been published in *New York Life*, that acknowledged standard of the world's humor, did almost as much for the story and me as did whatever merit the former possessed intrinsically.

Of the other verses, it is fair to say they have been published in the *Indianapolis Journal*, *Los Angeles Herald*, *Chicago News*, *New York Sun*, *Baltimore American*, *The Reader Magazine*, *Success Magazine*, *Associated Sunday Magazines*, and elsewhere, and to all these various publications I make humble and grateful acknowledgment.

They are a queerly assorted lot making a queer book—"a poor thing, but mine own."

Some of the verses are hilarious, others serious, others doubtful; nearly all are philosophical. Anyone can see

in a moment that my association with my wife and my children has been one of the most fruitful inspiration sources. They are my mainspring. Were it not for them I couldn't work so much; and I shouldn't need to, either.

S. W. G.

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FINNIGIN TO FLANNIGAN

Superintindint wuz Flannigan;
Boss av th' siction wuz Finnigin.
Whiniver th' cyars got off th' thrack
An' muddled up things t' th' divvle an' back,
Finnigin writ it t' Flannigan,
Afther th' wrick wuz all on agin;
That is, this Finnigin
Repoorted t' Flannigan.

Whin Finnigin furrst writ t' Flannigan,
He writed tin pa-ages, did Finnigin;
An' he towld just how th' wrick occurred—
Yis, minny a tajus, blundherin' wurrd
Did Finnigin write t' Flannigan
Afther th' cyars had gone on agin—
That's th' way Finnigin
Repoorted t' Flannigan.

Now Flannigan knowed more than Finnigin—
He'd more idjucation, had Flannigan.
An' ut wore 'm clane an' complatey out
T' tell what Finnigin writ about
In 's writin' t' Musther Flannigan.
So he writed this back. "Musther Finnigin:—
Don't do sich a sin agin;
Make 'em brief, Finnigin!"

Whin Finnigin got that frum Flannigan
He blushed rosy-rid, did Finnigin.
An' he said: "I'll gamble a whole month's pay
That ut'll be minny an' minny a day
Befure sup'rintindint—that's Flannigan—
Gits a whack at that very same sin agin.
Frum Finnigin to Flannigan
Repoorts won't be long agin."

Wan day on th' siction av Finnigin,
On th' road sup'rintinded be Flannigan,
A ra-aile give way on a bit av a currve
An' some cyars wint off as they made th' shwarrve,
"They's nobody hurrted," says Finnigin,
"But repoorts must be made t' Flannigan."
An' he winked at McGorrigan
As married a Finnigin.

He wuz shantyin' thin, wuz Finnigin,
As minny a railroader's been agin,
An' 'is shmoky ol' lamp wuz burrnin' bright
In Finnigin' shanty all that night—
Bilin' down 's repoort, wuz Finnigin.
An' he writed this here: "Musther Flannigan:—
Off agin, on agin,
Gone agin.—Finnigin."

HOMESICK

Ah, my hand is mighty hungry for a tiny, sweaty fist;
Both my lips are fairly famished to be warmly, wetly
kissed;

And my arm is simply starving for a fuzzy little head
That, when I am home and happy, loves to use it for a
bed.

Can it be that once I fretted at a peevish midnight wail
That will seem like sweetest music when I've hit the
homeward trail?

Was it I who put her from me with a feeling of relief—
I whose soul is sick to see her, be the absence long or
brief?

Was it I that grew impatient when she made me drop
my pen

And consume a precious hour soothing her to sleep
again?

Would I think that hour wasted could I swathe and
soothe her now

As I fondly play I'm smoothing out the puckers from her
brow?

Could I feel, when next I hold her, all that now I feel
and know,

Could I then recall the yearning as my lonely way I go—
But alas! When Love possesses, Love is blind and deaf
and dumb,

Saving his appreciation till the heart with grief is numb.

AFTER THE QUARREL

I ain't mad no more wif you;
Le's play horse—at's what le's do!

Say—when you was mad wif me
Ju fink I was mad wif you?
Well, I wasn't; only dest
At th' first—w'y, all th' rest
Of th' time I fought "O gee!
Wisht he wasn't mad wif me!"
An' that there's as true as true.

When I's settin' on our steps
While ago—I know you seen—
What ju fink I's tryin' t' do,
When I made a face at you?
Fought I'd make you laff an' then
We 'ud be good friends aden—
What did you-all s'pose I mean?

When you stumped your toe agin
That ol' piece o' busted brick
We'd been playin' wif, an' cried,
I dest tried an' tried an' tried,
But I couldn't say a word—
Anyway, if you'd 'a' heard
How I felt, you'd made up, quick.

Wasn't it a long time, though,
'At you wouldn't speak t' me
An' I wouldn't speak t' you?
It was mostly half-past two
When you wanted what I had
An' I sassed you back so bad,
An' it's now most half-past free!

I ain't mad no more wif you—
Le's play horse—at's what le's do!

MORNING GLORY AND VIOLET

A lusty morning glory grew beside a rustic porch;
Each blossom flaunted to the breeze a flaring crimson torch.

He boasted o'er the Violet that grew beside his feet
With tiny purple blossoms and a perfume gently sweet.
He said: "Within my shadow you will ne'er be seen
by men—

They'll note my glorious trumpets and they'll love me
only, then."

The Violet said nothing; but with sweetly scented smile
Put forth her dainty blossoms and her deep green leaves
the while;

Her fragrance reached the porch seat where the master
of the place

Sat dreaming, and a tender smile crept softly o'er his
face.

He murmured: "Ah—a violet! I catch its perfume
rare!"

Then pushed aside the tall vine's leaves and found her
cowering there.

The jealous Morning-glory heard the words the master
spoke

Unto the humble Violet, and then his proud heart broke.
O, boasters, ere ye scoff and rail o'er small things at your
feet,

Know well that if the humblest life exhale a perfume
sweet,

The scent will reach the nostrils of the Master of the
place,

And win reward abundant in the smile upon His face.

THE BUILDER

"Let us build a nation's highway," said a Nervous Little Man.

Took he then his puny pencil and he planned a petty plan.

(He was little, he was scrawny; he was anything but great

As we reckon them that cavil in the councils of the State.)

But he made the pregnant earth

Travail with the iron's birth;

Made the cringing woods bring timber—many million dollars worth,

Bade the mines yield coal and money; and he forced his fellowmen

Bend above the pick and shovel till their bodies ached again.

Rose the Hill and rose the Mountain, in his line of march that lay,

And they smiled in pompous power as they blocked his onward way.

(He was little, he was scrawny; how could Hill or Mountain know

God who made them was within him, to dispel each fright or foe?)

Then he hacked the Hill in two

And he tooled a tunnel through,

And he corkscrewed down the Mountain as the homing cattle do.

Hordes of helpers hewed before him, bended ever to his will.

Now we loll and laugh, who scamper through the Mountain and the Hill.

"Brothers, let's be quit of Distance," said the Restless Little Man.

"Let us have a journey ended ere of old such things began."

(He was little, he was scrawny, he was nothing to the sight,

But the God who shaped the soul of him had surely shaped it right.)

Then he straightened out each squirm

And he made the roadbed firm,

Helped by many a cunning craftsman with many a puzzling term.

Thus he drew huge cities nearer to each other by a day—
When the builder points his pencil, God alone can say him nay.

THE LAY OF THE LIVER

Now his pa had died of liver on the Okeechobee river,
And his mother's liver'd killed her in the west.
Then a sister warmly cherished had been taken ill and
perished,

Though she'd coddled up her liver just her best.
Next his brother Bill was taken with a sort of inward
achin'

That required no skilled physician to discern
Was a case of plain cirrhosis, by the quickest diagnosis—
William kicked the well-known cooperage in turn.

Now this liver-haunted fellow with a face as jaundice
yellow

From the constant fear that racked him day and night,
Set before himself the question how to obviate con-
gestion

And to keep his liver well and working right,
Then he learned from Dr. Slaughter that the danger lay
in water,

And that, once he found a spring to suit his case,
He could live on, infinitum, just to fool folks or to spite
'em,

Till the skin was dried like parchment on his face.

So he sought with ardent vigor 'mid the northern win-
ters' rigor,

So he sought amid the tropics further south,
And he never saw a puddle but he said "Perchance this
mud'll

Be the stuff to break my liveristic drouth."
Yes he tried 'em all, be jabbers, never ceasing from his
labors

Till he found the sort of water he required;
And he settled there to stay till his distant, dying day,
While he boasted, in a way to make you tired.

Happened down in Old Virginia, did this yarn I'm bound
to spin ye,

And this liver-liberated fellow stayed
Till, by tanking up discreetly, he had cured himself com-
pletely

Of the symptoms that had rendered him afraid.
To a century and fifty he was feeling nice and nifty,

But his body grew exhausted—there's the rub.
Yet his liver, when he croaked, with such deathlessness
was soaked,

That they took it out and killed it with a club!

ME AN' PAP AN' MOTHER

When I was a little tike
I set at th' table
'Tween my mother an' my pap;
Eat all I was able.
Pap he fed me on one side,
Mammy on th' other.
Tell ye we was chums, them days—
Me an' pap an' mother.

Sundays, we'd take great, long walks
Through th' woods an' pasters;
Pap he al'ays packed a cane,
Mother'n me picked asters.
Sometimes they's a sister 'long,
Sometimes they's a brother;
But they al'ays was us three—
Me an' pap an' mother.

Pap he didn't gabble much;
Hel' his head down, thinkin'.
Didn't seem t' hear us talk,
Nor th' cow-bells clinkin'.
Love-streaks all 'peared worried out
'Bout one thing er nuther;
Didn't al'ays understand pap—
That's me an' mother.

I got big an' went away;
Left th' farm behind me.
Thinkin' o' that partin' yit
Seems t' choke an' blind me.
'Course I'd be all safe an' good
With m' married brother,
But we had to part, us three—
Me an' pap an' mother.

Hurried back, one day ; found pap
 Changed, an' pale an' holler ;
Seen right off he'd have to' go—
 Where we couldn't foller.
Lovin' streaks all showed up then—
 Ah, we loved each other !
Talked fast, jest t' keep back tears—
 Me an' pap an' mother.

Pap he's—dead ; but mother ain't ;
 Soon will be, I reckon ;
Claims already she can see
 Pap's forefinger beckon.
Life hain't long, I'll go myself
 One these days eruther,
Then we'll have good times agin,
 Me an' pap an' mother.

Purtier hills we'll have t' climb,
 Saunterin' 'long old fashion,
Hear th' wild birds singin' 'round ;
 See th' river splashin'—
If God 'd only let us three
 Be 'lone, like we'd ruther,
Heaven'd be a great ol' place
 For me an' pap an' mother.

MODERN MEDICINE

I went to a modern doctor to learn what it was was
wrong.

I'd lately been off my fodder, and life was no more a
song.

He felt of my pulse as they all do, he gazed at my out-
stretched tongue;

He took off my coat and weskit and harked at each
wheezing lung.

He fed me a small glass penstalk with figures upon the
side,

And this was his final verdict when all of my marks he'd
spied:

“Do you eat fried eggs? Then quit it.

You don't? Then hurry and eat 'em,
Along with some hay that was cut in May—

There are no other foods to beat 'em.

Do you walk? Then stop instanter—

For exercise will not do

For people with whom it doesn't agree—

And this is the rule for you:

Just quit whatever you do do

And begin whatever you don't;

For what you don't do may agree with you

As whatever you do do don't.”

Yea, thus saith the modern doctor, “Tradition be double
durned!

What the oldsters knew was nothing compared to the
things we've learned.

There's nothing in this or that thing that's certain in
every case

Any more than a single bonnet's becoming to every face.

It's all in the diagnosis that tells us the patient's fix—

The modern who knows his business is up to a host of
tricks.

Do you eat roast pork? Then stop it.
You don't? Then get after it quickly.
For the long-eared ass gives the laugh to grass
And delights in the weed that's prickly.
Do you sleep with the windows open?
Then batten them good and tight
And swallow the same old fetid air,
Through all of the snoozesome night.
Just quit whatever you do do
And do whatever you don't;
For what you don't do may agree with you
As whatever you do do don't.

I USED TO THINK I LOVED YOU

I used to think I loved you when, amid the roses fair,
I saw the shadows glimmer in your dusky, dark-brown
hair;

When 'neath the film-flecked firmament I watched the
sunlight play

Within your hazel eyes that said more than your lips
dared say.

I used to think I loved you when we murmured soft and
low

Beside your friendly hearthstone in the dying embers'
glow;

When hand in hand we ventured on the very verge of
love

And when your voice far sweeter seemed than coo of
woodland dove.

I used to think I loved you when we sat beside the sea
And watched the waves beat madly while the foolish
heart of me

Was beating still more madly 'gainst the crumbling
shores of speech

And both concealed the longing that was in the heart of
each.

I used to think I loved you when we wandered 'neath
the moon

Whose semi-tropic glow was like a silvered, softened
noon;

When on my arm your light hand lay and thrilled me
through and through—

Those days I hungered always for the sight and sound
of you.

I even thought I loved you on that night when first your
kiss

Sent bounding through my being such a wondrous wave
of bliss;

When first within my starving arms I clasped you to my
breast

And felt, deep in my heart of hearts, a sense of new-
found rest.

But O when in the tiny home your love has made for me
I hear your blessed accents and your love-lit face I see,
I know that in those early days my love was but a
dream—

So vastly, grandly sweeter does this later loving seem.

PATRIOTIC REMNANTS

The evening of the Fourth has come,
But where is Willie's ear?
The one that's left looks quite the same,
But where is Willie's ear?
This morning when he went to play,
With cannon-crackers all the day,
His lugs were twain; now, where, I pray
Is Willie's other ear?

Upon the Fourth the sun has set,
But where is Albert's nose?
We've all our little darlings, yet,
But where is Albert's nose?
When to the fray he went at morn,
With matches, punk and powder-horn,
He'd all the things with which we're born—
Now where is Albert's nose?

The gloaming's started in to gloam,
But where is Charlie's leg?
The rest of Charles has all came home,
But where is Charlie's leg?
The man who drave the ambu-lance
Said laughingly, "No more he'll dance,
But 'twill be cheaper buying pance"—
Ah, where is Charlie's leg?

Thus every Fourth our darlings lose
Some features or a limb;
'Tis 'most enough to cause the blues
And make life hard and grim.
But many be their limbs or few
Compared with those that on them grew,
We'll shout for Yankee-doodle-do
From dawn till dusktide dim!

PUSH—DON'T KNOCK

Upon the door I saw a sign;
I cried, "A motto! And it's mine!"
A wiser thing I never saw—
No Median or Persian law
Should be more rigidly enforced
Than this, from verbiage divorced—
It's logic firm as any rock—
"Push—don't knock."

'Twas simply meant to guide the hand
Of him who wished to sit or stand
Within the unassuming door
This weight of sermonry that bore.
'Twas never meant to teach or preach,
But just to place in easy reach
The ear of him who dealt in stock—
"Push—don't knock."

Yet what a guide for life was that—
Strong, philosophical and pat;
How safe a chart for you and me
While cruising o'er life's restless sea;
Push, always push, with goal in view:
Don't knock—avoid the hammer crew;
This rule will save you many a shock:
"Push—don't knock."

When on that door I see the sign,
I say "Great motto, you are mine."
No stronger sermon ever fell
From human lips; no sage could tell
The hothead youth more nearly how
To point alway his vessel's prow;
There are no wiser words in stock:
"Push—don't knock."

“NOW I LAY ME.”

(The Chicago Mothers' Council officially condemned the use of the old-fashioned childhood bedtime prayer “Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep.”)

They announce that “Now I Lay Me” is officially condemned,
And that all the turgid tide of years those “mother” folk
have stemmed;
They have put the little bedtime plea that you and I were
taught
On the list of ancient, outworn things that should be set
at naught.
Ah, how foolish were the mothers God supplied to you
and me!
And how rudderless the boat in which He sent us forth
to sea!
For the poor, misguided creatures with the mother-love
so deep
Were unwise enough to teach us “Now I Lay Me Down
to Sleep.”

Think a bit—that white-robed figure kneeling by the bed
is you;
And the words your lips are saying fall as soft as twilight dew
On your spirit; “Now I lay me, blessed Father, down to
sleep;
Through the hours of dark I pray thee my defenseless
soul to keep.
If thou needest me, my Father, ere at morning time I
wake,
Thine I am, and hence I pray thee to Thyself my soul to
take.”
Reverence and sweet submission, faith that God was
watching there—

Yet those "Mother" folk condemn it as a senseless
pagan prayer!

Think of all the men and women who were reared to
kneel each night

By the knee of some good mother, just at early candle-
light,

And repeat the words familiar while within each little
breast

Lived a faith that God would keep them through the wel-
come time of rest;

Think of all the things those "mothers" of the present
day have failed

To adjust to modern science—'tis a thing to be bewailed.
Still a lot of common parents having common sense, will
keep

Teaching baby lips to utter "Now I Lay Me Down to
Sleep."

UNDER THE WILLOWS

I see the dear old farmhouse and the swards that round it
lay;

I see the apple orchard and the gray-brown ricks of
hay;

I see the currant bushes fringing fragrant fields of
wheat—

Ay, all the rustic pictures mem'ry brings to me are sweet,
E'en to the hazel bushes that I robbed, each glowing
Fall;

But just beyond the culvert was the dearest spot of all.
'Twas there the grand old willows, that I still distinctly
see,

Stood, sifting golden sunshine through their lacy tops for
me.

There, prone beside the singing stream, I lay and gazed
in awe

At all the weird, wide wonder-world my wondering
child-eyes saw;

Between me and a turquoise sky with alabaster clouds
The spider sailors spun their strands and furled their
filmy shrouds;

I saw in that enchanted realm of azure, green and white,
The golden-coated orioles that twittered love's delight
While fashioning a dwelling-place to rear their unborn
brood,

That soon would spread their yellow beaks and clamor
for their food.

Then, gazing past the willow world with youth's un-
bridled eyes,

I turned each silver cloud into a palace in the skies;
Each palace held a stately king that none but I could
see—

The bits of cloud that broke away were chariots sent for
me.

Sometimes a snow-white fairy clad in shining robes of
mist
Would beckon to me with her wand—I never could
resist;
Then off to Fairyland we'd float, and wondrous sights
we'd see—
Till some one came and woke me up to call me in to tea.

I love that dear old farmhouse and the swards that round
it lay;
I love the apple orchard and the gray-brown ricks of hay;
The currant-bordered pathway fringing fragrant fields of
wheat—
Ay, all the rustic pictures mem'ry brings to me are sweet,
E'en to the stunted hazels that I robbed each flaming
Fall;
But just beyond the culvert is the dearest spot of all:
There stand the gnarled old willows that I still distinctly
see,
And sift, as then, the sunshine through their lacy tops for
me.

A FOOTBALL HERO

From the jaws of the jungles of Jayville the Jasper hiked
out of his lair;

The barn-breath breathed balm from his bootlets, the
hay-germs had homes in his hair;

His mouth hung ajar like a fly-trap, each hand was as big
as a ham;

His freckles a leopard-like legion, his verdancy far from
a sham.

His clothes were those mother had made him, his mop
had been mowed 'round a crock;

Each wilted congressional gaiter was rimmed with a
négligé sock.

When Reuben strayed in with his satchel, and eyes you
could snare with a rope,

A "ha-ha" arose from the campus that strangled the last
of his hope.

But Reuben was big—he was husky; his legs were like
saplings of oak;

His arms were like steel, and he'd often made two-year-
old steers take a joke;

His back was the back of a Samson—gnarled, knotted,
and hard as a rock;

His neck would have served as a bumper to ward off a
switch-engine's shock;

His unpadded shoulders were hillocks of sinew and
muscle and bone;

His chest was a human Gibraltar, his voice had a Vul-
canoid tone.

His prowess had never been tested quite up to its limit,
at home,

Although he had romped with the yearlings and guided a
plow through the loam.

The boss of the 'leven was speechless when Rusticus
loomed on the scene.

What mattered the fact he was shabby? What mattered
the fact he was green?

Could ever a team get a line-up 't would stand for a
centre like that?

The ranks of the foe would evanish ere one could articu-
late "Scat!"

He rushed to the Reuben and nailed him, and led him
away to a room

Where trainers and rubbers proceeded to marvel and
fondle and groom;

And when, at the close of a fortnight, the wonder was
trotted to sight,

The grand-stand and bleachers went daffy and howled
themselves hoarse with delight.

What next? Ask the worried kodaker who skirmished
in vain for a shot!

The Reuben-led phalanx proceeded to score, with a loose-
jointed trot;

The foe faded fast as a snowflake in Tophet's most tropi-
cal pit,

While Rusticus romped through the rout like a mastodon
having a fit.

And when all the team that opposed him lay mangled and
dead on the field,

The mob went as mad as a Mullah, and hooted and bel-
lowed and squealed.

Then Rusticus, bordered with lasses who called him a
hero and prince,

Pranced off with his halo of glory, and hasn't been worth
a cuss since.

A BABY THE SIZE OF MINE

When I see somebody's baby just about the size of mine,
As I prowl about the country with my little special line,
There's the queerest sort of feeling at the bottom of my
throat

And the train bells and the whistles take a sad and sob-
bing note.

Both my arms begin to hunger for the load that's always
light,

And I'd give my soul to hear her calling "Daddy," in the
night.

But I've got to gulp my grieving nor betray the slightest
sign,

When I see somebody's baby just about the size of mine.

When I see a sturdy youngster just about the size of
mine,

I am less the rugged oak-tree, more the clinging, ten-
drilled vine;

Then I know the strength attributed to man is half a
myth,

And the storm-defying bole becomes the bruised and
bended withe.

Then I know the ones I cherish are the guardians of me,
While my world would scarcely recognize the picture it
would see

Should it happen to discover in my eyes the brimming
brine

When I see a little baby just about the size of mine.

YOUR IMPRESS

Now what is your niche in the mind of the man who met
you yesterday?

He figured you out and labeled you; then carefully filed
you away.

Are you on his list as one to respect, or as one to be
ignored?

Does he think you the sort that's sure to win, or the kind
that's quickly floored?

The things you said—were they those that stick, or the
kind that fade and die?

The story you told—did you tell it your best? If not, in
all conscience, why?

Your notion of things in the world of trade—did you
make that notion clear?

Did you make it sound to the listener as though it were
good to hear?

Did you mean, right down in your heart of hearts, the
things that you then expressed?

Or was it the talk of a better man in clumsier language
dressed?

Did you think while you talked? Or but glibly recite
what you had heard or read?

Had you made it your own—this saying of yours—or
quoted what others said?

* * * * *
Think—what is your niche in the mind of the man who
met you yesterday

And figured you out and labeled you; then carefully filed
you away?

MADE OVER

She had seen him and she liked him; he was single—so
was she;

She grew interested in him—such a case you often see.

He reciprocated promptly, and it gratified the maid—

In a thousand modest manners her delight the maid
displayed.

He was certain that he pleased her, to the turning of a
hair,

And was sure that e'en his failings seemed to her as vir-
tues rare.

But within her heart the maiden softly murmured, day
and night,

“With a little making-over he would be exactly right.”

Week by week the two kept meeting; day by day their
friendship grew;

Each was certain that the other had a loyal heart and
true.

He was sure she was perfection, sure she thought the
same of him,

And the trust he thought she carried kept the man in
moral trim.

His belief in her perfections made him ask the maid to
wed,

And she gave no hint of doubting in the tender “Yes”
she said.

Yet this thought was interwoven with her new-found
love's delight:

“With a little making over he would be exactly right.”

They were wed. She made him over. He's another chap
to-day;

But in lopping off his failings other things were cut away.

He has lost the faults she censured, but the scars are
plain to see,

And she'd like to have him back again just like he used to
be.

For she's learned a costly lesson: That when God has
made a man

He is founded, framed and finished on a pretty careful
plan.

And this one-time maiden murmurs in her sorrow, day
and night:

"If I hadn't made him over he would be exactly right."

WHICH FORK?

Some persons yearn for knowledge
Of the kind you get at college;
Some long for musty facts from days ago;
Some hunger to be knowing
What the future will be showing,
While others watch the present humming on.
But when I'm called out to dinner
By some plutocratic sinner
Who was always in the social swimming pool,
I would give a whole diploma,
E'en my college-bred aroma,
I would give it all and gladly be a fool—
I would give my evening clothes,
And the joy that ebbs and flows,
When I hear the mellow popping of the cork,
Were I not alway forgetting
One small thing that keeps me fretting—
If I only could recall

“ Which fork? ”

There's quite a row beside me,
But the wo of woes betide me,
If ever I can get them sorted out;
For each one has its duty
Just as each its dainty beauty—
The oyster one is three-tined, short and stout;
But the rest—they have me guessing
In a manner most distressing,
And I'd almost trade my hope of future joy
For a chance to eat again
In the farmhouse dull and plain
With the tools I used to handle when a boy.
For I'm sure I'll never learn,
Though I yearn and yearn and yearn,

Though I spend a dozen seasons in New York,
Just which trident's next in line;
So from soup to nuts and wine
I am haunted by the thought,
"Which fork?"

WHEN SYLVIA SWATHES HERSELF

When Sylvia swathes herself in stuffs that show her
sylphsome shape
She makes the murm'ring mermaids put on bolts and
bolts of crape;
She gives the nymphs and houris cards and spades and
beats them out;
And when she starts to drift up street with drapings
pulled about,
The shades of Venus, Hebe and Diana weep and wail,
While Daphne—yes, and Psyche—pad themselves with-
out avail;
And Juno—O forget her!—is a gnarled, ungainly ape,
When Sylvia swathes herself in stuffs that show her
sylphsome shape.

When Sylvia's swathed in silken stuffs that show her
swanlike shape
She's naught but curves of beauty from her French heels
to her nape;
The sirens of mythology, Medusa and the rest,
Are all outclassed by Sylvia when she dons her level best.
A gawky thing's the heroine of Knighthood's time of
bloom,
And Alice bred in Old Vincennes would recognize her
doom
If she should see our Sylvia in her clinging auto-cape
When she has swathed herself in stuff that shows her
sylphsome shape.

When Sylvia's swathed in silken stuffs that show her
sylphsome shape
The strands of weeping willow and the tendrils of the
grape
Go hide themselves for clumsiness; the swallow on the
wing

Looks awkward as a camel trying on the highland fling;
The wild gazelle that gambols o'er the plains is put to
shame,

And swayings of the Persian dance seem commonplace
and tame.

In vain do other maidens try to learn to dress and drape,
When Sylvia's swathed in silken stuffs that show her
sylphsome shape.

MY SECRET

Though you be wiser far than I,
I can not envy you.
The busy world has countless ways
I may not learn, 'tis true.
Yet one grand truth I've won at last,
From which the lore of all the past
And all the coin that e'er was cast
Could never make me part:
I've found the secret door that leads
Into the human heart.

Mythology's a blur to me,
All history's a blank—
I know not who won Waterloo,
The allies or the Frank;
Yet while I know the hidden road
Down which the tides of care have flowed
That lent a human heart its load,
Content I'll play my part,
And travel oft the way that leads
Into the human heart.

For he who finds the path by which
The heartaches come and go,
Who speaks the sympathetic word
That lightens human wo,
Will aye be loved by those who feel
His tenderness about them steal;
From him they care not to conceal
The tears that fain would start.
I'm glad I know the door that leads
Into the human heart.

GRINNING PHOTOGRAPHS

She had a picture taken with her wedding harness on—

It surely did look good enough to eat;

It made a splendid half-tone for the common herd to con;

They cried: "Who e'er saw anything so sweet?"

They had a stunning carbon made and hung it on the wall

Of what they called the parlor, in their cozy little nest,

And there it hung and grinned at them and never stopped
at all—

It grew to be a regulation, trouble-breeding pest.

It grinned when they were angry and it grinned when
they were sad;

It grinned when they were worried or distraught;

It grinned when they were pious and it grinned when
they were bad;

It grinned when all the air seemed trouble-fraught.

It seemed to grin the hardest when dear wifey looked the
worst—

Dark mornings, when her frowsy hair and sullen eyes
were frights;

And when her fiery temper made her feel as though she'd
burst,

It grinned and grinned ten thousand thousand devilish
delights.

'Twas awful, in the centre of a bad old fam'ly fuss,

To have her hubby point at it and sneer;

'Twas awful, when her feelings were all tangled in a
muss,

To have him call that photograph a dear.

So one day in his absence she got busy with an axe;

She jerked that picture off the wall where it so long
had been;

She chopped it into slivers with some well-directed
whacks—

She'll never have another picture taken with a grin!

TOMORROW

My life has reached the sunset way ;
 'Mid the twilight shadows deep
The tender love of my Father's voice
 Is lulling my soul to sleep.
My empty arms are hungering
 For the forms once sheltered there,
But the Father has taken them all away—
 They needed a kindlier care.

One night when my life was young and strong,
 I was crooning a lullaby
To my sweet, wee tot three summers old,
 When the baby began to cry
For the dollies my mother-hands had made,
 And I soothed her childish sorrow
With the words: "Your babies are put away;
 You may have them again, tomorrow."

And now, as I travel the sunset road
 'Mid the twilight soft and deep,
While my empty arms are starving
 For the forms once hushed to sleep,
The Father in love bends over me
 And there's hope instead of sorrow
As he says: "Your babies are safe with me;
 You may have them again—tomorrow."

THE MUSIC THAT CARRIES

I've toiled with the men the world has blessed,
And I've toiled with the men who failed;
I've toiled with the men who strove with zest,
And I've toiled with the men who wailed.
And this is the tale my soul would tell,
As it drifts o'er the harbor bar:
The sounds of a sigh don't carry well,
But the lilt of a laugh rings far.

The men who were near the grumbler's side,
O, they heard not a word he said;
The sound of a song swept far and wide,
And they hearkened to that instead.
Its tones were sweet as the tales they tell
Of the rise of the Christmas star—
The sounds of a sigh don't carry well,
But the lilt of a laugh rings far.

If you would be heard at all, my lad,
Keep a laugh in your heart and throat;
For those who are deaf to accents sad
Are alert to the cheerful note.
Keep hold on the cord of laughter's bell,
Keep aloof from the moans that mar;
The sounds of a sigh don't carry well,
But the lilt of a laugh rings far.

THE CROOKED WINDOW PANE

I been an' had the measles an'
My mommy kep' me in,
She said I might go blind, she did,
An' never see agin.
So I ist stayed an' stayed an' stayed
An' never cared a grain,
Cause I had fun a-lookin' froo
Our crooked winder pane.

One way I bent my head an' looked,
Our fence wuz awful tall;
An' when I moved an' looked some more
'Twas hardly there at all.
'Nen stoopin' lower, I c'd make
A treetop touch the sky—
'Nen, lookin' froo th' uver place,
'Twas ist two inches high.

An' people—they wuz funniest fings;
For when they hurried past
They all wuz tall and slim at first,
An' dumpy at th' last.
I'd holler out an' laugh my best,
Till they'd look back to see,
An' nen go on, a-wonderin',
How they had tickled me.

My mommy is the best, I guess,
'At any boy has had;
For when I told her my new game
She says, "All right, my lad."
An' when I'd showed her ist what place
Out on th' grassy plot,
She fed my kitten an' my pup
Right on that very spot.

If ever I have little boys,
An' live in some big town,
An' they come home all hot an' sick,
An' measles gets 'em down,
I'll have it fixed beforehand, so
They'll never care a grain,
Cause ev'ry winder in my house
Must have a crooked pane.

THE UNIVERSAL HABIT

I saw her go shopping in stylish attire,
And she felt
Of her belt
At the back.

Her step was as free as a springy steel wire,
And many a rubberneck turned to admire
As she felt
Of her belt
At the back.

She wondered if all those contraptions back there
Were fastened just right—'twas her unceasing care;
So she felt
Of her belt
At the back.

I saw her at church as she entered her pew,
And she felt
Of her belt
At the back.

She had on a skirt that was rusty and new,
And didn't quite know what the fast'nings might do;
So she felt
Of her belt
At the back.

She fidgeted 'round while the first hymn was read;
She fumbled about while the first prayer was said.
Oh, she felt
Of her belt
At the back.

Jack told her one night that he loved her like mad,
And she felt—
For her belt
At the back.

She didn't look sorry, she didn't look glad;
Just looked like she thought " Well, that wasn't so bad! "

As she felt
For her belt
At the back.

And—well, I don't think 'twas a great deal of harm,
For what should the maiden have found but Jack's arm,

When she felt
For her belt
At the back?

SOME ONE HEARS

(To the members of the American Press Humorists.)

Brother, listen here a little to the song of one who knows
Why the ripple's on the river and the red is on the rose—
One to whom a voice has whispered (while his heart
stood still to hear)

Why the bloom is on the bramble, why love's sunshine
gilds the tear.

Listen—'tis a humble message brief as we would wish
our cares,

Sweet as soft-played twilight music stealing o'er us
unawares.

This it is: The richest reaping of reward your toil will
bring

When you think nobody listens to the little songs you
sing.

'Tis the nightingale imprisoned in the fastness of a cage
Where no answering philomela's notes his pining may
assuage—

His the song that sways the heartstrings with the loneli-
ness it breathes,

His the power that the poet hath entwined with laurel
wreathes.

Crying out against the darkness, praying for an echoed
call,

In a thrilling, throbbing cadence hear his pleadings rise
and fall;

So God lets us think our music on a callous world we
fling—

Lets us feel nobody listens to the little songs we sing.

Courage, brothers; while a clamor from the busy world
may rise

Filling all the songless spaces 'neath the overarching
skies,
While we feel our little murmur may be heard by none
but us,
Sing—sing on; though hearts may falter, it is best we
labor thus.
Someone—here, or there, or yonder—hears no sound
amid it all
But the cadence of our carols as they bravely rise and fall.
And the very hope it yearns for to some weary soul you
bring
While you fear nobody listens to the little songs you
sing.

SHE CALLED MY BLUFF

She called my bluff,
Indeed she did.
Since then the truth
Cannot be hid.

I'd made the usual display
Of borrowed virtues day by day;
I'd smiled o'er mishaps, just as though
My disposish were always so.
I'd strewed my money without stint,
Of poverty dropped ne'er a hint—
You know the rest; this is enough
To make you know that same old bluff.

She called it, though—
Ah, yes; for she
Believed it all
And married me!

SOURCES

I passed a stagnant marsh that lay
 Beneath a reeking scum of green,
A loathsome puddle by the way;
 No sorrier pool was ever seen.
I thought: "How lost to all things pure
 And clean and white those foul depths be."—
Next day from out that pond obscure
 Two queenly lilies laughed at me.

I passed a hovel 'round whose door
 The signs of penury were strewn;
I saw the grimed and littered floor,
 The walls of logs from tree-trunks hewn.
I said: "The gates of life are shut
 To those within that wretched pen";
But, lo! from out that lowly hut
 Came one to rule the world of men.

SONG OF THE FREIGHT CAR

I'm a bumped and battered freight car on a sidetrack in
the yard;

I am resting—resting gladly, for my life is cruel hard,
And I seldom find an hour when I'm soberly at home,
For I'm usually loaded and am out upon the roam.

I've been shunted in Seattle, I've been switched in Boston
town;

I've been stranded in St. Louis, where I saw the train
crew drown.

I've been snowed in up by Denver, I was wrecked at
Council Bluffs,

When the strike was in Chicago I was stoned by thugs
and toughs.

I've hauled lumber in Wisconsin, I have helped move
Kansas wheat;

I have camped within the stockyards till they filled me up
with meat;

I have brought green watermelons from the sunny,
sunny South,

While the darkies gazing at me 'gan to water at the
mouth.

I have rumbled o'er the Coast Line on the California
shore,

I have hauled the Lompoc mustard crop and Santa Ana
ore.

I have been from Manitoba down to Matagorda Bay,
While on every trip I've traveled by the longest, slowest
way.

I have hauled the toil-scared hobo by the dozens and by
ones;

I have carried honest poor men in my longer westward
runs;

I have carried fleeing criminals deep-buried 'neath the
corn

That from off the rustling ranches to the greedy mills was
borne.

I have carried knaves from justice, I have carried fools to
wealth,

Hauled the hopeless home to perish, hauled the invalid to
health.

I have stood between the tourist and the scenery he
thought

Should be seen from sleeper window when a "guide
book" he had bought.

I have often lost an axle when the train was wrecked, and
stood

For a week until the workmen found the time to make it
good.

I've been everywhere, seen all things, been in sunshine,
rain and snow.

I've been idle for a fortnight, then for months upon the go.

I'm a bumped and battered freight car on a sidetrack in
the yard;

There are chalk marks on my body—these my only call-
ing card.

But I see the pony engine coming for me on the fly—

No idea where I'm going or what for, but—bump—good
by!

THE CRY OF THE ALIEN

I'm an alien—I'm an alien to the faith my mother taught
me;

I'm an alien to the God that heard my mother when she
cried;

I'm a stranger to the comfort that my "Now I lay me"
brought me,

To the Everlasting Arms that held my father when he
died.

I have spent a life-time seeking things I spurned when I
had found them;

I have fought and been rewarded in full many a win-
ning cause;

But I'd yield them all—fame, fortune and the pleasures
that surround them;

For a little of the faith that made my mother what she
was.

I was born where God was closer to His children, and
addressed them

With the tenderest of messages through bird and tree
and bloom;

I was bred where people stretched upon the velvet sod to
rest them,

Where the twilight's benediction robbed the coming
night of gloom.

But I've built a wall between me and the simple life
behind me;

I have coined my heart and paid it for the fickle world's
applause;

Yet I think His hand would fumble through the voiceless
dark and find me

If I only had the faith that made my mother what she
was.

When the great world came and called me I deserted all
to follow,
Never knowing, in my dazedness, I had slipped my
hand from His—
Never noting, in my blindness, that the bauble fame was
hollow,
That the gold of wealth was tinsel, as I since have
learned it is—
I have spent a life-time seeking things I've spurned when
I have found them;
I have fought and been rewarded in full many a petty
cause,
But I'd take them all—fame, fortune and the pleasures
that surround them,
And exchange them for the faith that made my mother
what she was.

BLEMISHES

I saw her in the cloistered dimness where
We stranger twain a moment bowed in prayer.
Upon her cheek a grossly-blemished place
Made hideous an otherwise lovely face.
I pitied her, deep in my inmost soul,
That Fate on her had levied such a toll.
Then in new radiance the lights upsprang
And with relief my spirit leaped and sang.
The scar that lashed my sympathy like whips
A red rose was, its stem between her lips!

Oft in the darkness of our clouded ken
We note shortcomings in our fellowmen:
Soul-blemishes and mind-disfigurements,
Faults past denial, traits that give offense.
We pity or we blame, inquiring: "Why
Must others so less perfect be than I?"
Then comes the clearer light of graver years—
Virtues enlarged, sins shrunken, through our tears—
Till that which seemed a fault in blinder days
Shines out a glory and compels our praise!

HEAVEN

Heaven is a bed
With a light at the head,
 And an uncut magazine;
Or a crust of bread
To the long-unfed
 Whose hunger pangs are keen.

Heaven is a smile
From a soul worth while
 And a hand-clasp full of trust;
'Tis a tender word
From a heart love-stirred
 When your spirits trail in dust.

Heaven is to feed
On your chiefest need,
 Be your need or work or rest.
And the God who knows
Why he barbed the rose—
 He plans your Heavens best.

EGOTISM'S ANTIDOTE

When ye kind o' git t' thinkin'
Ye're th' whole endurin' thing,
When ye think th' world must have ye
Same's a kite must have a string,
Then it's time t' fix fer dodgin'
An' begin t' look around—
'Cause they's somepin' goin' t' hit ye
That'll surely take ye down.

When ye git t' livin', reg'lar,
'Way up in th' upper air,
An' when folks without a field-glass
Couldn't find ye anywhere,
Then it's time to git yer parachute
An' see 't it's workin' right,
While ye glance tow'rd terry firmy
Pickin' out a spot t' light.

'Cause most folks is lots like water—
Finds their levels off an' on,
Though they 'vaporate occasional'
An' we wonder where they've gone;
But they're bound t' light back somehow,
Fog er rain, er coolin' dew—
An' when I say "folks," I reckon
That's includin' me and you.

STAMINA VERSUS BLUFF

Once I knew a brilliant laddie,—you have known the very kind,—

Who began at such a pace he left the other lads behind;
Problems he could solve instanter made us others groan
and sweat,

And in envy he was labeled, “teacher’s precious little pet”:

But, in later life, the figure that he cut was sad to see,
For he soon was far to rearward e’en of stupid you and me.

’T seemed the talents we had envied lacked the lasting sort of stuff,

And he didn’t have the stamina to follow up his bluff.

Brilliant starts are far more common than a brilliant finish is;

Rockets roar,—the falling handles make a faint and feeble fizz;

Deer, when flushed, do feats of running that would take a fellow’s breath,

Yet the man who knows his quarry simply walks the deer to death.

Pluck and never-ending courage are the things that help us most,

And the winner’s oft the one who didn’t waste his breath to boast.

Plod and pray, but plod while praying, be the roadway smooth or rough;

Thus you cultivate the stamina to follow up your bluff.

THE SEWING-MACHINE DRAWER

They sing of the oddities commonly found
In pockets of boys; or the things in a mound,
Unearthed by some archæological freak
Beside a small Buckeye or Michigan creek;
You know of the stores where there's naught you could
wish

That isn't at hand—from a desk to a dish.
But what are all these to the truck to be seen
Snarled up in the drawer of a sewing machine?

A lot of "attachments," though nobody knows—
Unless it's the agent—where one of them goes;
Some bobbins of thread tangled up in a mess,
A piece of the lining of somebody's dress;
A paper of needles, a caster or two,
A penknife and scissors, an old baby shoe—
With everything else that is not to be seen
Except in the drawer of a sewing machine.

Deep down in the tomb of old Rameses II,
They found a few trinkets on which they'd not reckoned;
In burial places of sachems are hid
'Most any old thing, if you lift off the lid.
We know what milady's hand-satchel contains—
A muddle sore-puzzling to masculine brains;
But these are all thrown in the shadow, I ween,
By what's in the drawer of a sewing machine.

COUNTING THE COST

To make one little, golden grain
Requires the sunshine and the rain,
The hoarded richness of the sod,
And God.

To form and tint one dainty flower
That blooms to bless one fleeting hour
Doth need the clouds, the skies above,
And love.

To make one life that's white and good,
Fit for this human brotherhood,
Demands the toil of weary years—
And tears.

THE FIDGETS

I'm got th' fidgets; when I go t' bed
(I sleep wif Billy), I ist scratch my head
An' squirm around an' git th' covers mixed
Till Billy says, "Aw, goo'ness sakes! Git fixed."
An' when I try t' tell him how it was,
He says, "Aw, I'll git up an' slap your jaws!"

I wake up in th' night most froze t' deff
An' hear Bill sayin' fings nunder his breff.
'Cause somehow all th' cover's on th' floor,
An' Bill says he won't sleep wif me no more—
Dogged if he will; an' when he swears that way,
I freaten 'at I'll tell our ma next day!

Nen Billy he ist helps me snuggle down
An' tells me I'll be nicest boy in town
'F I shouldn't tell, an' when I say "I won't,"
He grits 'is teef an' says "You better don't!"
If they's a fidget doctor anywhere
I'm goin' t' see him, if my ma don't care.

THE CHILDREN

This world's a rare and joyous place
For those who deem it so,
With smiles enough for every face—
This is no vale of woe.
But yet, when all's been done and said,
Some little children creep,
At cuddling time, unkissed to bed
And sob themselves to sleep!

Their daddy's off at work somewhere,
Their mother's tired and worn,
Both burdened down with carking care
From earliest break of morn.
Each love-starved young one on the list
Has troubles by the heap,
Yet each must go to bed unkissed
And sob himself to sleep!

Oh, world of sunshine mixed with storm,
Oh, world of tears and joy,
Oh, world of frozen hearts and warm,
Oh, world of man and boy,
Less were your sorrow, less your dread
If, when night's shadows creep,
Each little tad went kissed to bed
And smiled himself to sleep!

A MODEST PRAYER

I would not linger away, Lord, upon this earth below ;
I'd gladly cut my tether rope and swiftly skyward go,
There's lots of things don't suit me, yet I see no way to
fix 'em ;

Each time my plans get good and ripe some other fellow
picks 'em.

I've toiled and schemed and acted square—well, just as
square's I could,

But some old way or other things don't get a-going good.
Yet, ere I plume my crippled wings and start to hike me
hence,

Lord, let me linger long enough to get a grain o' sense !

From childhood on to middle life I've not accomplished
much ;

I've fooled around and made a mess of everything I'd
touch ;

I've balled things up to fareyouwell until at times I've
been

Ashamed, though all alone, to think what comp'ny I was
in.

And, worst of all, I've never made a point-blank fizzle yet
From which a single little drop of comfort I could get,
It's always been my own fool fault—no use to make
pretense,

Please don't transplant me, Lord, until I've learned a
little sense !

Some other chaps, who went to school with me when I
was young,

Who seemed to have still less of brains though more of
leg and lung,

Have stumbled into things that paid and made their little
pile

While I, with all my striving, never got within a mile

Of anything worth having—do you wonder I am sore
And hate to give it up until I've tried a little more?
And then, besides, you'd never want an angel half so
dense—
Lord let me linger here until I've learned a little sense!

THE COMMON HERD

"The common herd"—God bless us, everyone!—
We common folk who toil from sun to sun;
We who our brother's hardships understand
Nor strive to hide the callous on each hand;
We who in countless thousands throng the street,
Oft silent though in sympathy we greet;
Without our help what great thing has been done?
"The common herd"—God bless us, everyone!

"The common herd"—that flinches not from toil
Through freezing winters, or when summers broil;
That bravely treads its round from day to day
And clothes and feeds itself on meager pay;
That comes more near content than they who boast
A daily income that would feed a host;
That sweetly sleeps when each day's toil is done—
"The common herd"—God bless us, everyone!

AMBITION'S AIDS

Patience to drudge in obscurity,
Patience to smile in adversity,
Patience to wait for prosperity;
Courage to do what you think you can,
Courage to use aye the better plan,
Courage to yield to a better man;
Love for the work you attempt to do,
Love for the weak ones that cling to you,
Love of the kind that is ever true—
Patience, and Courage, and Love.

A RECOLLECTION

Straight out of a ragtime medley, the girl in the flat above
Leaped into an old-time church tune that told of a
Father's love.

Back into the past I followed, my soul with a mem'ry
thrilled,
My eyes with a tear-mist blinded, my heart with a sweet-
ness filled;
Back into the care-free boytime when faith was a blessed
thing—
Back where I had heard my parents that quavery church-
tune sing.
I saw, with the eyes of dreaming, the little frame church
that stood
At turn of the country roadway that bordered a beechen
wood;
The sun, through the tree-boughs filtered, is mottling the
shingled roof
And trembling, as though in rev'rence the elements held
aloof.

The door is ajar. I enter—then pause till the prayer is
done;
The voice is a voice familiar—he prays for an errant son.
Then up from their knees arising, both sinner and saint
join in
The words of that quaint old church-tune—the trebles so
high and thin,
The tenors with raucous raspings, the bassos with husky
growl,
The baritones wild, uncertain, that critics would call “a
howl”;
But yet—from my heart I say it, although it may seem
absurd—
That music was far the sweetest of all I have ever heard.

'Twas nasal in tone, I grant it; 'twas wrong in its time, I
ween;

'Twas awkwardly phrased; the organ was little and old
and mean.

But there in the Sabbath something that reigns in a
country church,

Where travels the ship of Zion with never a heel or lurch,
With faith in the God above me, ere yet had the world
defiled,

With trust in a gold-paved heaven—the trust of a clean-
souled child—

If I could go back—God pity!—and kneel while my father
prayed;

Could join in the hymn whose echo the girl in the flat had
played—

Straight back into ragtime medley the girl in the flat
above

Leaped out of the old-time church-tune that told of a
Father's love.

AT SLEEPY TIME

My voice is like the filing of a saw;
My friends flee when I agitate my jaw;
I can empty any room with my rusty basso boom,
And my vocalizing breaks the nuisance law.
But there's one—she's pretty, too; and as wise, some
ways, as you,
Who thinks my voice the finest in the land—
She comes with fist in eye begging, "Papa, baby bye!"
When the sleepy-man is scattering his sand.

When the evening romp is winding to a close
And my little baby's cheek with laughter glows,
When her night-robe from the press has replaced her day-
time dress,
Then the little darling rubs her eyes and nose,
And she comes with dimpled hands and in mute appeal-
ing stands
As she says: "I dot some somefin' in my eye;
Take me up a 'ittle bit, 'cause I'm s'leepy I can get,
An' O p'ease, sing to me, papa—baby bye."

Yes, my voice is like the filing of a saw,
And my friends are fewer when I use my jaw;
I have emptied many a room with my raucous basso boom
And my vocalizing cracks the nuisance law.
But while that one, sweet and true, thinks my voice as
good as new,
I'll not envy any singer in the land;
For she comes with fist in eye, begging, "Papa, baby
bye,"
When the sleepy-man is scattering his sand.

BABY'S FAVORITE RESORT

They talk of sea-shore havens and the mountain-top hotels;

They prate of quiet country lanes where peace in plenty dwells;

They speak of winter-comfort in the Southland and the West—

The hollow of my mother's arms I'm mighty sure's the best.

They sing of lakeside places where 'tis cool in summer-time;

They boast of restful harbors in some distant foreign clime;

They seek the falls in springtime and the springs in early fall—

I know a spot on mother's arm that is the best of all.

The journey thither costs me but a fretful cry or two;

The time it takes is nothing—in a trice the trip is through.

The service there is perfect and the food is quite the best—

I know no place that's finer than my mother's arm, for rest.

BELIEVE

Believe, and make the world believe, your jaw is set to win;

Believe (belief's contagious), that your ship is coming in;
Believe that every failure 's brought about by lack of grit;
Believe that work 's a pleasure if you buckle into it;
Believe there 's help in hoping, if your hope is backed with will;

Believe the prospect's fairer from the summit of the hill;
Believe, with all your power, that you're sure of winning out;

Believe, keep on believing: they are brothers,—Death and Doubt.

Believe,—not as the dreamer, with his listless hands a-swing,—

Believe, with muscles rigid and life's battle flag a-fling;
Believe God doesn't always wait until we cry to Him,
But blesses oftener the hand that's fighting with a vim;
Believe, with him of old, that all things come to them that wait,

Then, while you're waiting, hustle at a doubly strenuous rate;

Believe that, in this life, we get our sternly just deserts;
Believe the world is partial to the man that hides his hurts.

Believe the clouds have only veiled—not blotted out,—the sky;

Believe there's sweeter sunshine for the blessed by-and-by;

Believe the blackest dark proclaims the speedy dawn of day;

Believe your joy's but waiting till you drive the dumps away;

Believe the nights are nothing to the days that lie
between;
Believe there 's much that's better than you've ever heard
or seen;
Believe that—not alone your sin,—your good will find you
out;
Believe; keep on believing: they are brothers,—Death and
Doubt.

AN OLD MAN'S RETROSPECT

When I met her, wooed and won her, in the time of bud
and bloom,

There were dainty little dimples in her cheeks and in
her chin;

In her sweet brown eyes the lovelight said I'd met my
blessed doom,

And my foolish heart went pounding till it made a
mighty din.

That was happy years on years ago; our love is still the
same

As it was among the roses when she gave herself to
me;

She declares she's ne'er regretted that she took my
humble name,

Though she now is wearing wrinkles where the dim-
ples used to be.

Life with me's been such a burden that she's lost her
dimples now,

And their former situations each with wrinkles are
defined;

There are crow-tracks 'round her patient eyes, and on
her haloed brow

Cruel footprints of our common cares are intricately
lined.

Yet to me she's still the maiden of the time of bud and
bloom,

And her cheeks are filled with roses such as tempt the
honey-bee;

Still I feel the thrill that filled me when I read my
blessed doom,

And her wrinkles are the dimples that they always
were to me.

Some sweet day, adown the valley leading to the sunset-
land,

When the buds and blooms are withered and life's
wintry sky is gray,

We will take each other reverently, gently, by the hand—
Through love's silence sweet as music we will softly
steal away.

We will find a land of roses, where the sun will always
shine,

Where 'tis always bud and blossom-time for lovers
such as we;

I shall read again that story as her brown eyes smile to
mine—

And her wrinkles will be dimples through eternity, for
me.

CONTRASTS

The man who boozes hardest gets the praise when he reforms;

The man who's been the coldest feels the gladdest when he warms;

The man who's been the wettest feels the finest when he's dried;

A baby's laugh is sweeter when we know it lately cried;

The balky horse that goes will get the credit every time;

The clock that stops the oftenest gives out the sweetest chime;

The naughtiest of sinners gets the glory when he's saved;

The man that's often stubbly gets the compliments when shaved.

The train that's called the slowest gets the headlines when it speeds;

The stingy man wins laurels when financially he bleeds;

The sickly-looking athlete sets the bleachers fairly wild,

And people rave when ugly folks produce a handsome child;

The student who is dumber than the very dullest ox,

Gets credit, when he wakens, with the shrewdness of a fox;

The fool who's bright by accident gets credit for the brains,

And healthy folks who sicken have the terriblest of pains.

The seed that lay the longest in the ground, with ne'er a sprout,

We raved about the hardest when it finally came out;

The book in which the author claimed to put the most of soul

Came back upon the publishers and left them in the hole;

The eye in which a chunk of dirt has lodged for half a
day
Feels better than the other when you've gouged the dirt
away.
In fact, the subject's endless, and you'll have to guess
the rest,
But lines we think the weakest often please the public
best.

CONVINCED

I have listened to agnostics since my childhood days o'
 faith
Till th' trust my mother taught me seemed as fleetin' as
 a wraith;
I have shed th' light o' reason on th' Bible tales, an'
 thought
That th' mirricles it told about could never have been
 wrought.
I have proved beyond a question that such doin's hadn't
 been—
But when I set down t' read 'em, I believe 'em all agin.

I have heard it proved b' science that the sun-delayin'
 stunt
That is credited to Joshua 's an' error; you may hunt
Through th' volumes o' biology frum frontispiece t' end
F'r th' fish that swallowed Jonah—but she isn't there, m'
 friend.
That th' masonry o' Jericho should tumble at th' toot
Of a lot o' sheepish head-gear is a tale at which they hoot.
But although th' things I mention seem preposterously
 thin,
When I set an' read 'em over I believe 'em all agin.

Take th' one about where Samson with th' jawbone of a
 mule
Tackled thousands o' Philistines with this funny fightin'
 tool;
That there tale of Neb'chadnezzar goin' grazin' like a
 steer,
Would impress the careless hearer as at least a trifle
 queer;
While that one about that donkey rode by Balaam speak-
 in' out—
That un's quite as hard a story to believe—er just about.

T' be brief, they's lots o' stories has a world o' queerness
in,

But when readin' of m' Bible I believe 'em all agin.

'Tain't a matter of conjecture, it's a certainty, y' see—
Wonderfuller things has happened t' sich dubs as you an'
me;

There's our mothers still a-lovin' us through all these
fruitless years—

Yep, I'll stop it ef ye think that I'm a-tappin' ye fer tears.
Nature's doin' things each minute with a lot more won-
ders in,

So I set an' read m' Bible an' believe it all agin.

DRESSIN' BY THE FIRE

Men goes around a-claimin' they're so big an' brave an'
strong,

An' strangers to th' weaknesses that rightfully belong
T' women-folks an' children—ust to make that bluff
m'self

Afore I took an' laid a lot o' false pride on th' shelf.
But now I'm willin' to admit that every foolish whim
That clings to kids an' women with a grip that's mighty
grim—

I've got it; an' I envy folks that just sets down t' cry
Instead o' hoardin' all th' hurt for heart-ache by an' by.
An' mornin's—hate t' own it, 'cause it's nothin' to
admire—

I'd like some one t' lug me out an' dress me by th' fire!

They's times when men with families feels 'most like
givin' up—

Th' stiddy pull for years an' years t' drag in bite an' sup
An' just 'bout half enough t' wear, has lots o' sameness
in;

An' sometimes 'tain't much easier for t' bear than 'tis t'
grin.

Sich fellers needn't tell me that they never feel a thing
Like havin' some one take 'em in their arms an' sing an'
sing

Th' old-time melodies that lulled their childish heads t'
sleep—

'Twould make th' next day's climbin' seem not half so
rough nor steep.

But 'twouldn't do, I reckon, if I'd raise up to inquire
How many'd like t' be lugged out an' dressed beside th'
fire?

Some day we'll all be babies once agin, as like as not—
Leastways He said "Lest ye become"—ye'll have a
harder lot.

Folks has a right t' figger on what all th' scripters means,
An' common folks can wonder just as good as kings and
queens.

It's my guess that in heaven all us women-folks an' men
That's starved to death for lovin', wishin' we was kids
again,

Will be took up an' cuddled in th' Everlastin' Arms
An' lullabied so sound asleep that all the world's alarms
Can't wake us; an' I'm bettin', when we jine th' heavenly
choir,

We'll all git carried out an' dressed beside th' parlor fire.

A SONG OF HOPE

I ain't been along th' road as
 Fur as some,
But she's kep' a-gittin' better
 As I've come.
'Twill be better still next year
Sure as I'm a-settin' here—
Lookin' back I'll see some mountains
 I have clumb.

WATCH YOURSELF GO BY

Just stand aside and watch yourself go by;
Think of yourself as "he," instead of "I."
Note, closely as in other men you note,
The bag-kneed trousers and the seedy coat.
Pick flaws; find fault; forget the man is you,
And strive to make your estimate ring true.
Confront yourself and look you in the eye—
Just stand aside and watch yourself go by.

Interpret all your motives just as though
You looked on one whose aims you did not know.
Let undisguised contempt surge through you when
You see you shirk, O commonest of men!
Despise your cowardice; condemn whate'er
You note of falseness in you anywhere.
Defend not one defect that shames your eye—
Just stand aside and watch yourself go by.

And then, with eyes unveiled to what you loathe—
To sins that with sweet charity you'd clothe—
Back to your self-walled tenement you'll go
With tolerance for all who dwell below.
The faults of others then will dwarf and shrink,
Love's chain grow stronger by one mighty link—
When you, with "he" as substitute for "I,"
Have stood aside and watched yourself go by.

WE OCCUPIED A BOX

I've been to see a lot of shows
Since I forsook the farm,
Including some that folks have said
Do one a deal of harm.
But I recall one where I missed
All risk of moral shocks—
The one in which I occupied
A second-story box.

We heard the curtain rising, and
We knew it had begun;
And when we saw folks leaving, *why*,
We knew the thing was done.
But what transpired between times—well,
My guesses come in flocks,
But I don't know for certain, for
We occupied a box.

'Twas halfway to the roof, where we
Could see the pulleys work,
And when 'twas dark we faintly saw
Some stage hands through the murk.
But when the show was at its height
We surely got our knocks,
For we were safely hidden in
That second-story box.

The lady sitting at the edge
Which overhung the crowd
Could see the footlights, and sometimes
She giggled right out loud.
And then we knew she'd caught a glimpse
Of some one on the stage;
But that was all our bunch could learn,
In our sequestered cage.

We got to read our programmes through,
The laundry ads and all;
Learned where to buy our dry goods when
We fixed up for the fall;
We learned whose prices were the least,
Who carried largest stocks;
But—see the show? Nay, nay, Pauline,
We occupied a box!

WHEN PAPA HOLDS MY HAND

I'm not a-scared o' horses ner street cars ner anyfing,
Ner automobiles ner th' cabs; an' once, away last spring,
A grea' big hook an' ladder fing went slapty-bangin' by
An' I was purtnear in th' way, an' didn't even cry;
'Cause when I'm down town I go 'round wif papa—
un'erstand,
An' I'm not 'fraid o' nuffin' when my papa holds my
hand.

W'y street cars couldn't hurt him, an' th' horses wouldn't
dare;

An' if a automobile run agin 'im, he won't care!
He'll al'ys keep between me an' th' fings 'ith danger in—
I know so, 'cause he al'ys has, 'ist ev'ry place we been;
An' nen at night I laugh myself clear into Dreamyland
An' never care how dark it is, when papa holds my hand.

'S a funny fing—one night when I puttended I was 'sleep
An' papa's face was on my hand, I felt a somepin creep
Across my fingers; an' it felt ezactly like a tear,
But couldn't been, for wasn't any cryin', t' I could hear.
An' when I asked him 'bout it he 'ist laughed to beat th'
band—

But I kep' wonderin' what it was 'at creeped out on my
hand.

Sometimes my papa holds on like I maybe helped him,
too,

An' makes me feel most awful good puttendin' like I do.
An' papa says—w'y papa says—w'y somepin like 'at we
An' God 'ist keep a holdin' hands the same as him an' me.
He says some uvver fings 'at I 'ist partly un'erstand,
But I know this—I'm not afraid when papa holds my
hand.

THE WORRYLESS MAN

The man who's clean quit worrying—I found him, t'other day ;

'Twas in a humble little town in Eastern Ioway.

His features was as quiet as you'd ever wish to see—

So sort o' nice and placid, not a bit like you or me.

I'd heard about the sort o' folks that never worried none—

No matter if the sky was clouds instead o' blue an' sun.

But most o' such I'd found to be a sort o' false alarm

That had their times for worrying, when life seemed shy o' charm.

But O, this placid fellow that I found in Ioway—

He didn't care a penny if it snowed two foot in May ;

He didn't want no worldly goods beyond his little need,

While to Ambition's siren voice he never gave no heed.

He didn't even worry lest his children turn out bad—

They'd have to fail or not, without a-bothering their dad.

His life-long business rival's caught the trade this man had sought—

The man who never worries doesn't give the thing a thought!

How did I chance to meet him? At a gathering, that day I had to make an hour's stop in Eastern Ioway.

A lot o' folks in carriages had drove to town and met

As close about his dwelling as their vehicles could get.

They formed a long procession just in honor of the man—

This chap affiliated with the antiworry clan.

They done a little talking and they sung a little verse,

While he who'd clean quit worrying—he occupied the hearse.

THEY CALL ME STRONG

They call me strong because my tears I shed where none
may see;

Because I smile, tell merry tales and win the crowd to
me;

They call me strong because I laugh to ease an aching
heart,

Because I keep the sweet side out and hide the bitter
part.

But, O, could they who call me strong live but an hour
with me

When I am wrung with awful grief in my Gethsemane!

They call me strong because I toil from early morn till
late,

Well knowing there will be no smile to meet me at the
gate.

They call me strong because I hide an inward pain with
jest,

And drive away the care that comes unbidden to my
breast;

Perhaps 'tis strength—God knoweth best; He sent the
cares to me!

And His—not mine—the strength that keeps through
my Gethsemane!

TO A NEW BABY

Little kicking, cuddling thing,
You don't cry—you only sing!
Blinking eyes and stubby nose,
Mouth that mocks the budding rose,
Down for hair, peach-blows for hands—
Ah-h-h-h! Of all the "baby-grands"
Any one could wish to see,
You're the finest one for me!

Skin as soft as velvet is;
God (when you were only his)
Touched you on the cheek and chin—
Where he touched are dimples in.
Creases on your wrists, as though
Strings were fastened 'round them so
We could tie you tight and keep
You from leaving while we sleep.

Once I tried to look at you
From a stranger's point of view;
You were red and wrinkled; then
I just loved, and looked again;
What I saw was not the same;
In my eyes the blessed flame
Of a father's love consumed
Faults to strangers' eyes illumed.

Little squirming, cuddling thing!
Ere you shed each angel wing,
Did they tell you you were sent
With a cargo of content
To a home down here below
Where they hungered for you so?
Do you know, you flawless pearl,
How we love our baby girl?

“THE WATER’S FINE”

I have had some invitations from my wealthier relations
Humbly begging my attendance at their houses;
I’ve had bids to ball and party that were earnest, warm
and hearty;

I’ve been asked to join bohemian carouses.
I’ve been asked to take a junket where I shouldn’t spend
a plunket,

Though we took a joyous journey “down the line,”
But the best, beyond a doubt, was that old-time boyhood
shout

From the swimming hole: “Come in, the water’s fine!”

Hot? The landscape fairly wiggled while you rapturously
wiggled

From the garments that were sticking to your skin;
And the sycamore was leaning—all-protectingly careening
O’er the limpid pool that struck you at the chin.

With a whoop of satisfaction you were speedily in
action—

No such wealth was ever digged from out a mine
As was yours for less than asking as you splashed or lay
a-basking,

After heeding that “Come in, the water’s fine!”

Now I toil from morn till gloaming, doing office grinds
or roaming

Where the avenues of trade are ever thronged;
I must dress in garb of fashion, sans compunction or
compassion,

Else the public would be wonderfully wronged.
But whene’er the sun is burning, to my soul there comes
a yearning

For the call we loved in boyhood, brother mine—
Ringing joyously and clear on a mighty willing ear,
And its burden was: “Come in, the water’s fine!”

THE UNPOPULAR MAN

Give me for friend the man whose friends are few;
Who, though his heart be clean and staunch and good—
Though every fiber of his soul be true—
Is tactless, blunt, and seldom understood.

In such a drift God oft conceals a lode
Whose richness makes Golconda's wealth seem naught;
On such an one He oftentimes has bestowed
Large worth so hid it must be shrewdly sought.

So, while the rabble fawns on him whose friends
Are as the sands that rim the ocean's blue,
I choose the best of all that heaven sends—
Give me for friend the man whose friends are few.

THE QUIET MAN IN THE CORNER

I lingered o'er a checker game a night er two ago;
The one who played against me seemed to have no ghost
of show;

I had a bunch of lusty kings that strutted all about
And bullied my opponent's men, who dared not venture
out.

'Way over in a corner shrunk a timid little man
Who'd stayed right in his station ever since the game
began.

He watched my crowned heads marching by with banner
and with song,

And seemed to be discouraged over standing still so long.
But pretty soon an opening occurred two blocks away,
And not another moment did that little fellow stay.

He bounded o'er the board and took three kings in one
fell swoop,

Then landed in my king row with a wild, ecstatic whoop.

You've known those quiet fellows that just sat around
and thought

And never made a noise while the others raged and
fought;

The whole community had come to think of them as dead,
Or else so very near it that their hope of fame had fled.

The chaps with recognition for their portion pose and
strut,

And seem to overlook the man who keeps his talker shut.
But some day, when 'most every one is lookin' t'other way,
This quiet fellow sees a chance to break into the play.

He reaches out and grabs things that the others had
ignored;

He puts into the life-game all the energy he'd stored
Through years of patient silence. So you'd better not
forget

The still man in the corner—he may reach the king row
yet!

WHAT THE BAD MAN SAID

Th' man that's puttin' down th' walk in front o' our back-door,

Ma says he's awful wicked an' I mustn't watch no more;
He's sulky an' he's fussy an' he mutters naughty things
Whenever he ain't suited with th' kind o' bricks they
brings—

I heard 'im, even if he did just kind o' say it low—
He said things bad as them I thought th' time I stumped
my toe!

I listened through th' winder—it was up a little bit—
I heard 'im just as easy, an' my ma most had a fit
When he commenced a-sayin' things he hadn't ought to
said;

She groaned “ My goodness gracious!” an' her face got
awful red.

She said “ That brute's a-sayin' things you hadn't ought
t' know!”—

She couldn't guess I'd thought 'em all th' time I stumped
my toe.

An' so th' man's 'at's layin' bricks in front o' our back-door

Keeps on a-sayin' things, I s'pose, but I can't hear no
more;

My ma she keeps th' winder down an' talks a streak t' me
Because that brickman's language isn't what it ought t'
be.

I mustn't tell you what he said—it wouldn't do, you
know;

But I thought things as bad as that th' time I stumped
my toe.

THE SCALLOP IN THE SKY

When dark had settled on my world and all was hushed
and still—

Except some distant dog that bayed, the raucous whip-
poor-will,

The flapping poultry seeking place upon the roosting-
pole,

A cricket shrilling through the murk from some seques-
tered hole—

When all but these were silent, making silence deeper
seem;

When chores were done and coal-oil lamps set all the
house agleam,

I used to steal away awhile and gaze with hungry eye
Upon one bright horizon spot, a scallop in the sky.

'Twas where the lights that lit the town a few short
miles away

Flared up against the edge of night and turned its gloom
to gray;

And I, ambitious, filled with hope as vague as love or
life,

Gazed, dreaming, at that glimmer with its hint of glori-
ous strife;

It told me wondrous tales of wealth, but most it spoke
of fame—

That peace-destroying thing that sets the boyish heart
afame;

It sang brave songs of conquest, told me many a sweet
half-lie—

That gateway to my wonder-world, my scallop in the
sky.

The time I dared not hope for came: I stand without that
gate

Which tempted me to wander forth and grapple with my
fate;

I've seen the great, big wonder-world to which ambition
led—
Found love and wealth and conquest, but the glamour
all has fled.
Though life be sweet, the roseate hue my boyish fancy
gave
Has vanished; and the boon that most we weary world-
lings crave
Is that blest time of boyhood when each wide, dream-
dazzled eye
Saw but the sweet that lay beyond the scallop in the sky.

THE SWEETEST SONG

O singer in whose soul such sweetness dwells
That, hearing others' songs, thou dost declare
The singing that from out thine own throat wells
Doth but pollute the unoffending air,
Do not despair and think the world hath heard
The fairest message human lips may bring;
Instead, with all thy being rapture-stirred,
Thank Heaven there still are sweeter songs to sing.

If in thy heart a melody hath sprung
And grown and thriven through blessed years on years,
Its little tendrils to love's breezes flung,
Its branching rootlets watered oft with tears;
If, when it seems at last the time is come
To give it to the world, another voice
Trill forth the song, while thine own lips are dumb,
And make the whole wide, list'ning world rejoice—

If such thy fate, O singer, bide thy time,
For God is only sending thee to school;
Thee hath he destined for a richer chime,
Softer than rippling rings on dimpled pool,
Sweet as the voice of angels when on high
They set their love-born ecstasies afloat.
Sing on, sing on; the whole world, by and by,
Must know thou hadst a sweeter song to sing.

THE POSTOFFICE PEN

I have heard the strange tale of a tramp that would
work;

I have heard of a story new;

I have seen an industrious government clerk,
And a wash-day that wasn't blue;

I have handled a donkey not stubborn a bit,
Seen a lunch-counter doughnut light,

But I never have heard—not so much as a word—
Of a postoffice pen that would write.

I've examined them here, I've examined them there,
From Cape Cod to the Golden Gate;

I've attempted to write with the pens at Bellaire,
In the wonderful Buckeye state;

I've attempted to write with the pens in Duluth,
With those down at Keeley-cure Dwight,

But I firmly affirm—and this statement is truth—
I have never found one that would write.

I may sometimes behold an intelligent fool,
A blackbird as white as the snow;

I may even find out an unbreakable rule
Or airships that really go,

Some day I may make a car window arise,
See a bluffer that hungers for fight;

But none of these things would be half the surprise
Of a postoffice pen that would write.

THE FINEST SIGHT

'Twas on a well-filled railway train one snowy winter day,

When each was sitting waiting for his station;
The most of us were speeding on to spend sometime away

From home, with friends or sweethearts or relation.
A sweet, old white-haired lady sat three seats in front of me—

A gray-haired man beside her called her "Mother";
And there I sat and wondered if a finer sight could be
Than two old gray-haired folks that love each other.

The love of youth for youth is strong and thrills folks
through and through;

The love of middle age is sweet and deeper;
The love of our decrepitude is as the compass true,
Each praying to be first to meet the Reaper.
I've seen the dawn sweep o'er the sea and gild the distant hills,

I've seen the best the world affords, my brother;
But nothing else with helpful tears these hardened eye-
lids fills

Like two old gray-haired folks that love each other.

When down the western slope we go—my Chum and I,
together;

When she a crown of silvery white is wearing,
May she, close-clinging to my hand, ne'er stop to wonder
whether

The old-time love for her I still am bearing,
God grant—he's granted lots of things that gladdened
her and me—

My faded lips with kisses she may smother;
That when we've lost the fire of youth we twain may
come to be

Two gentle, gray-haired folks that love each other.

GET MAD

If the world don't do exactly as you think it ought to do,

Get mad;

If you meet with opposition, go and get a rag to chew—

Get mad.

Get as mad as hops, and show it;

Feed your anger—fan it, blow it;

Pout, and let the whole world know it—

Get mad.

If you step on a banana-peel and stand upon your skull,

Get mad;

Never smile and make a joke of it, or folks will think you
dull;

Get mad.

Turn and say things to the spot

Where the pavement quickly shot

Up and gave you such a swat—

Get mad.

If you want to be a comfort to the world we're living in,

Get mad;

If you want to keep folks' faces lighted always with a
grin,

Get mad.

For there's nothing else so funny

In this whole wide world, my honey,

As the man that's never sunny;

Get mad!

THE OTHER FELLOW'S JOB

There's a craze among us mortals that is cruel hard to
name,

Wheresoe'er you find a human you will find the case the
same;

You may seek among the worst of men or seek among
the best,

And you'll find that every person is precisely like the
rest.

Each believes his real calling is along some other line
Than the one at which he's working,—take, for instance,
yours and mine;

From the meanest "me-too" creature to the leader of
the mob,

There's a universal craving for "the other fellow's job."

There are millions of positions in the busy world to-day,
Each a drudge to him who holds it, but to him who
doesn't, play;

Every farmer's broken-hearted that in youth he missed
his call,

While that same unhappy farmer is the envy of us all.

Any task you care to mention seems a vastly better lot

Than the one especial something which you happen to
have got.

There's but one sure way to smother Envy's heartache
and her sob:

Keep too busy, at your own, to want "the other fellow's
job."

FINEST OF ALL

God made the streams that gurgle down the purple
mountain-side;

He made the gorgeous coloring with which the sunset's
dyed;

He made the hills and covered them with glory; and He
made

The sparkle on the dew-drop and the shifting shine and
shade.

Then, seeing that He needed but a crown for all earth's
charms,

He made a little woman with a baby in her arms.

He made the arching rainbow that is hurled across the
sky;

He made the blessed flowers that nod and smile as we go
by;

He made the ball-room beauty as she sways with queenly
grace,

But sweetest of them all he made the lovelight in the
face

That bends above a baby warding off all earth's alarms—
God bless the little woman with a baby in her arms.

WHEN OUR GAL SPOKE A PIECE

I ben t' doin's off an' on,
Like apple-bees an' spellin's,
T' quart'ly meetin's, public sales,
Hangin's an' weddin' bellin's;
But nothin'—sence the shewtin' scrape
Down on Bill Jones's lease—
Hez worked me up like t' other night
When our gal spoke a piece!

'Twuz down t' th' ol' frame meetin' house—
They called it "children's day";
Th' young 'uns done it purtnigh all,
Except th' preacher's say;
An' that hull program wriggled off
Slicker'n melted grease.
But th' place where I fergot t' breathe
'S where our gal spoke a piece!

The sup'intendent spoke right up—
I heerd him call her name!
An' there she come a trottin' out—
T' others may looked th' same,
But they wa'n't nary nuther one,
Not even Thompson's niece,
That looked wuth shucks to Moll an' me
When our gal spoke a piece.

Me an' my woman set down front,
Right clost th' mourners' bench;
An' list'nin' to that young'un speak
Give us an' awful wrench!
An' when we heerd 'em cheer an' ch'
We set like two ol' geese,
Wipin' th' silly tears away
While our gal spoke a piece!

'Twuz jest some little, easy thing,
Like "Twinkle, Little Star,"
Er Mary's leetle cosset lamb,
Er somethin' like that thar,
But 'twant no twinklin' starlight beams,
Ner tags frum lammie's fleece,
That made us blow our noses hard,
When our gal spoke a piece.

I haint ben what I'd orto ben;
I've staid away frum church,
An' sometimes Moll an' me hez thought
They'd left us in the lurch;
But—wal, we've kinder rounded up,
An' let our wand'rin's cease,
Sence we wuz down there t'other night
An' heerd her speak a piece.

THE OLD ASH-HOPPER

'Most everything that we know, in the spring,
Holds a lot or a little of poetry rare:
There's the flash of the sun on the streamlets that run
Past the idle one gazing all lazily there;
The sharp, shrilly bleat as the lambs' nimble feet
Leap over a log, in their crazy parade;
The birds' merry twitter, the sun's dazzling glitter
On each little puddle the showers have made.

O, it's then that your work is all easy—to shirk;
And your conscience can sleep till you hear the thing
snore;
Then your every excuse is "O, what is the use
Of digging and delving forevermore"
It is sweet then to dream by a sand-bottomed stream;
To watch a swift minnow-school crossing the shoal—
To be only a boy with a skin-full of joy
And forget that you ever laid claim to a soul.

But there's one desert spot in the old orchard lot
Where the climax of laziness comes once a year—
O, the castles of air built, on days that were fair,
Near that ancient ash-hopper—the thought brings a
tear.
Though the place I half dread, yet it runs through my
head
That if I could go back to those days full of hope
And could visit the farm in the spring's dreamy charm,
I would go to that place where we used to make soap.

Four posts driven down near the ash-heap, gray-brown,
In the form of a square, poles connecting the top;
With a trough down below where, now fast and now
slow,
The lye used to trickle in tongue-biting drops;

The boards, with one end in the trough, must depend
On the poles at the top for their other support.
Fill the hopper with straw, under orders from "Ma,"
Then ashes, then water, and then for the sport!

When the lye trickles out to the crock 'neath the spout,
'Tis conveyed to a kettle that's standing near by—
Fill it up to the top, although never a drop
Must once be permitted to splash in your eye!
Then the boiling goes on till the weakness has gone
From the lye, so three dips take the rays from a
feather,
Then the grease tumbles in, and the good times begin,
To last—till the soap's done, regardless of weather.

O, the everyday clothes eaten up—Mother knows—
By the ashes I sat in while lost in day-dreams
Of a future whose hope was unmixed with soft soap,
And my mind never tired of those fanciful schemes.
In my fancy I'm there, and my life's later care
Is a part of the dream I am dreaming again
Near that ancient ash-pile—if 'tis crude, you may smile,
But I've sat in the ashes in sackcloth, since then.

O, the sweet, sunny days, with their still, lazy haze,
Remove all the obstacles time placed between;
And my mind scampers back o'er the rough, stony
track,
Till I'm there on the farm with the others, again.
It is hard then to think there has been any link
That connected the past with the present; and so
I just revel in joy once again—like a boy,
Swallowed up in a bliss only dreamers may know.

WHEN THE JOKE'S ON US

We can get a lot of giggle from the cares of other folks,
We can pluck a lot of pleasure from our own delightful
jokes;

We can laugh to beat the mischief when the other fellow
slips

On a fresh banana peeling, as adown the street he trips;
We can smile a smile of rapture at a fellow-creature's
muss,

But it's quite another story when the

Joke's on us.

We can scheme and plot to humble some poor chap we
think is proud,

We are glad when he's the victim of the cackle of the
crowd;

We will play the blooming joker when the other fellow's
It

And will gurgle o'er his trouble till we nearly have a fit;
But we're southbound in a minute and prepared to start
a fuss

When the victim turns the tables and the

Joke's on us.

We will never reach perfection in this tricky human
game

Till a joke on t'other fellow or on us is all the same—

Till we laugh as long and loudly at our own discomfiture
As we do when someone else has held the bag the snipes
to lure;

We'll be failures just as long as we proceed to rave and
cuss

When the other fellow's laughing and the

Joke's on us.

THE OLD CABINET ORGAN

I've heerd The' Thomas an' his gang, I've heerd Phil
Sowzy's band!

I've heerd th' best musicianers they is, in all th' land.
I've heerd them nail-mill pieces 'at they blame ol' Wag-
ner fer;

But nothin' 'mongst 'em one an' all hez made my feelin's
stir

Like that ol' cab'net organ, with but jest eight stops in
all,

A settin' in our ol' best room, backed up agin' th' wall,
With th' organ agent playin' it—while we all stood
around,

An' none of us a breathin' lest we'd lose a single sound.

The day that organ come t' us, I'll al'ays hev in mind
Till this ol' head gits chilly, an' these glimmerin' eyes
gits blind;

My big school-teacher sister'd ben away frum home a
spell,

An' ben a takin' lessons till she played some things right
well;

An' nothin' else'd do 'er when she drawed her winter's
pay,

But she must hev a organ like the one she'd lairned t'
play;

Us folks all sort o' pooh-poohed at th' idee fer awhile,
But ye know th' one that airns it is th' one t' spend th'
pile.

An'—I wuz jest a goin' on t' tell how it got out
Amongst th' organ agents, what our gal hed thought
about;

But I hain't nary idee; cause she hedn't said a thing—
It must 'a' ben some sparrer jest a passin' on th' wing
'At ketched th' word an' tuck it; cause it wa'n't a week,
I guess,

Afore that gal wuz wearin' ev'ry day her Sunday dress,
A-entertainin' men 'at sold, each one, th' highest grade,
An' th' hollyhocks wuz smothered with th' dust their
 wagons made!

Bimeby two fellers lugged one up th' steps an' in th'
 door,
An' set it in th' best room, an' begin t' make it roar
An' whine an' howl an' tootle like a steam pianner goes—
Ye ort t' seen us men-folks in th' field throw down our
 hoes
An' stop th' plows an' ev'rything, an' jest go on th' run,
A-wipin' sweat an' tearin' on, right through th' bilin'
 sun—
Till we stood, in silent wonder, thinkin', 'mid them
 thrillin' strains,
Thorts uv instermmental music, jest as crude as Jubal
 Cain's!

That best room, with rag carpets an' its chromos on th'
 wall,
Spread out, an' got lots bigger'n th' biggest concert hall;
An' sev'ral uv us turned away t' cough an' wipe our eyes,
While th' clouds seemed floatin' under us, we got that
 clost th' skies.
Well, 'fore them fellers left, I guess they knowed they'd
 made a sale,
At prices that made us folks think th' organ men'd fail.
Th' fellers said themselves it wuz th' very lowest price
They got fer other organs, t'wuzn't half so big, ner nice.

Then all th' fam'ly—only Pap—tuck turns at tryin' t'
 play;
W'y mother ust t' set an' gouge out tunes fer half a day!
An' ev'ry one 'at hit th' stool commenced t' feel around
An' dig up "Jesus Lover," with one finger, jest b' sound.
The neighbors, settin' on th' porch, 'way after set o' sun,

Looked solemn, in th' moonlight, thinkin' what our gal
hed done—

A-squanderin' her money fer a organ, when she knowed
She orto gone an' paid it on th' debts her daddy owed!

I've heerd The' Thomas an' 'is gang, I've heerd Phil
Sowzy's band!

I've heerd th' best musicianers they is in all th' land;
I've heerd them 'sault an' batteries they blame ol' Wag-
ner fer—

In fact I've listened to 'bout all they is, 'at's made a stir;
But when in dreams I think I hear th' blessed heavenly
choirs

An' big arch-angels pummelin' celeschal harps an' lyres,
That music then reminds me (ef my thorts tetch airth at
all)

Uv that eight-stop cab'net organ shoved agin our best-
room wall.

SUCKING VS. CRUNCHING

When the lads were little codgers and their father gave
them candy

(One of them was little Freddie, t'other one was little
Andy)

Andy always took a bite off and bestowed it in his jaw
Where he let it stay dissolving like a January thaw;
But not Freddie—he went at it like a farmhand at his
lunch;

Andy always sucked his candy—Freddie liked to hear it
crunch.

'Course a short half hour later Freddie 'd be plum' out of
candy,

And he'd try his very hardest for to get a piece from
Andy;

But that kid would coolly tell him "Guess you had as
much as me;

'F you'd a-sucked instead o' chewin', w'y you'd still have
some—ye see?"

But 'twould be th' same way next time, Freddie never
took his hunch;

Andy still kept suckin' candy—Freddie liked to hear it
crunch.

Now they're men; when Fred has money he's a bully
boy—a dandy;

So he's broke before each pay-day—but it isn't so with
Andy.

Andy saves his dough and hoards it, puts it tenderly
away

Waitin', as he always tells you, for some gloomy rainy
day.

Consequently he has gathered quite a noticeable bunch—
Andy still just sucks his candy—Fred still likes to hear
it crunch.

THE EGOTIST'S HEAVEN

They have sung celestial pleasures of the ordinary sort—
Sitting on a golden sidewalk hearing brazen trumpets
snort,

Playing harps and dwelling ever 'neath a blue and cloud-
less sky—

These the pictures one is used to, of the blessed by and
by.

But to save my life I never felt inclined to change my
ways

For the things they've used to tempt me to be righteous
all my days.

Here's a thing would make the heaven that my pining
would assuage—

Let us each one have the spot-light and the center of the
stage!

In the heaven that I long for there is music low and
sweet,

And the white and glaring footlights are extinguished at
my feet.

There is darkness all about me, save for one long shaft
of light

That's upon my features resting like a sunbeam brave
and bright;

Bravos hail me from the darkness and I know that I am
seen—

That's the heaven that I yearn for, that's the sort of bliss
I mean.

And, if anybody asks you, that's the spirit of the age—
Struggling, fighting for the spot-light and the center of
the stage!

THE GIRL-CHILD

'Course we'd figgered on a boy-child, same as people always does—

Baby-girls is jest th' uselessest they is er ever was.

Helpless when they're kids an' helpless when they're middle-aged er old—

All th' fambly turns pector fer th' ewe-lamb of the fold.

Dassent ever pop th' question, even though she's lost in love;

Has t' set an' wait till some man labels 'er 'is turtle-dove.

Yit it wa'n't a boy, by gracious! when it come, th' other day,

But we've kind o' got a notion that we'll keep it, any way.

'Course 'twas dredful disapp'intin' that it couldn't bin a boy,

An' th' tears we shed er swallowed wa'n't no sparklin' tears o' joy;

But she's jest so small an' cunnin', an' she snuggles up so sweet,

With 'er fists like velvet rosebuds an' 'er little wrinkled feet—

Clingin' close, jest like th' tendrils of th' mornin'-glory vine

As it clambers up th' porch-post on a piece o' cotton twine—

Never knowin' she hain't welcome as th' flowers is in May;

So we've somehow got a notion that we'll keep 'er, any way.

Then, ag'in, I thought o' mother—she was onct a baby-girl.

Ain't no tellin' jest which eyester is th' one that hides the pearl.

Who'd 'a' knowed when she was little that she'd ever be
so great,
An' would make my dear old daddy sich a stiddy runnin'-
mate?
Then th' one that lays an' snuggles with this bran'-new
baby hyer—
Would my life be worth th' livin' if it hadn't bin fer her?
She was jest as pink an' helpless as this new one is one
day;
So it's purty easy guessin' that we'll keep her, any way.

THE FAMILY GROUP

I hain't a spark o' city pride—at least so people say;
I don't care who finds out my hair is full o' germs o' hay;
I don't care who discovers that I grewed up on a farm
An' hain't got ust t' street-cars ner that skeery fire-alarm;
But one sad mem'ry makes me gasp like when I had th'
 croup,
An' that's t' think how we-all looked in that ol' fam'ly
 group.

T' start in with, they's none of us would had it took that
 day—
Jist happened we was all in town, 'cause Bill was goin'
 away
With his best bib an' tucker on; an' so he says t' me:
"Le's go an' git a fam'ly group, like Williamsses," says
 he.
O' course we all felt proud o' Bill, an' fell in with a whoop
An' flocked right up them gallery stairs t' git that fam'ly
 group.

Th' photo-grapher kind o' laughed when we went flockin'
 in—
I've spent some years, in later life, a-figgerin' on that
 grin.
An' Bill he bossed th' job because he was a-goin' away—
Talked up an' showed that pictur man he wasn't any jay.
Th' feller went an' hid awhile in some ol' smelly coop,
An' got 'is shooter ready fer t' take our fam'ly group.

He put pa in th' middle with ma' settin' by his side;
He dragged Mahaly out from where she'd snuck away t'
 hide;
He yanked our chins an' fixed our hands an' pulled our
 faces 'round,

An' handled us all over like he's buyin' us by th' pound.
Then went an' hid behind a rag an' give a little stoop
An' says "That's all—nex' Saturday." He'd took our
fam'ly group!

I see it yit! Bill fixed up, lookin' like a full-blowed rose
Amongst a bunch o' rag-weeds; pa's a-wrinklin' up 'is
nose;

Mahaly's finger's in 'er mouth; Moll's got a sheepish
grin;

Tom's mad, an' I've got on some boots with awful
wrinkles in.

Ma's worried 'cause that head-clamp tilted up her bonnet-
scoop—

I'm sorry Bill suggested that we git a fam'ly group.

* * * * *

Ma laughs about it, but she keeps it hangin' on th' wall.
Mahaly's dead—her baby's there, a-growin' big an' tall.
All of us is scattered out—some of us gittin' gray;
An' pa sets dreamin' on th' porch, through every sunny
day.

I guess God's gittin' ready fer t' make a gentle swoop
An' take us up t' where they'll be a better fam'ly group.

RUTS

Th' world is full o' ruts, my boy, some shaller an' some deep;

An' ev'ry rut is full o' folks, as high as they can heap.
Each one that's grovelin' in th' ditch is growlin' at his fate,

An' wishin' he had got his chance before it was too late.
They lay it all on someone else or say 'twas jest their luck—

They never onct consider that 'twas caused by lack o' pluck.

But here's th' word of one that's lived clean through,
frum soup t' nuts:

Th' Lord don't send no derricks 'round t' h'ist folks out o' ruts.

Some folks has staid in ruts until they didn't like th' place,

Then scrambled bravely to th' road an' entered in th' race.

Sich ones has always found a hand held out for them t' grab

An' cling to till they'd lost the move peculiar to the crab.
But only them that helps themselves an' tries fer better things

Will ever see th' helpin' hand t' which each climber clings.

This here's the hard, plain, solemn facks, without no ifs or buts;

Th' Lord don't send no derricks 'round t' h'ist folks out o' ruts.

MAMMY'S LULLABY

Sleep, mah li'l pigeon, don' yo' heah yo' mammy coo?

Sunset still a-shinin' in de wes';

Sky am full o' windehs an' de stahs am peepin' froo—

Eb'ryt'ing but mammy's lamb at res'.

Swing 'im to'ds de Eas'lan',

Swing 'im to'ds de Souf—

See dat dove a-comin' wif a olive in 'is mouf!

Angels hahps a-hummin',

Angel banjos strummin'—

Sleep, mah li'l pigeon, don' yo' heah yo' mammy coo?

Cricket fiddleh scrapin' off de rozzum f'um 'is bow,

Whippo'will a-mo'nin' on a lawg;

Moon ez pale ez hit kin be a-risin' mighty slow—

Stahtled at de bahkin' ob de dawg;

Swing de baby Eas'way,

Swing de baby Wes',

Swing 'im to'ds de Souflan' whah de melon grow
de bes'!

Angel singehs singin',

Angel bells a-ringin',

Sleep, mah li'l pigeon, don' yo' heah yo' mammy coo?

Eyelids des a-droopin' li'l loweh all de w'ile,

Undeh lip a-saggin' des a mite;

Li'l baby toofies showin' so't o' lak a smile,

Whiteh dan de snow, or des ez white.

Swing 'im to'ds de No'flan',

Swing 'im to'ds de Eas'—

Woolly cloud a-comin' fo' t' wrop 'im in 'is fleece!

Angel ban' a-playin'—

Whut dat music sayin'?

“Sleep, mah li'l pigeon, don' yo' heah yo' mammy coo?”

ME AND BILL

Got t' thinkin' t'other day
'Bout my brother Billy, 'way
Off out there in Idaho
Where they's only Injuns grow.
Bill an' me ain't wrote a word
To each other, an' hain't heard
Nothin' 'bout each other sence
When that Spanish War commence.

Felt plum' bad t' think how Bill,
Snoopin' 'round some rocky hill
Huntin' signs o' gold, must feel
When a thought o' me would steal
Over him. Right then an' there
I resolved it wasn't fair
Treatin' pore ol' Billy so,
An' him out in Idaho.

Went an' got m' pen an' ink
An' m' paper; tried t' think
What I'd better say t' Bill
After six years' keepin' still.
Couldn't seem to strike it right
Though I tried with all m' might.
Ev'ry idee that would come
Seemed to sound most awful dumb.

'T last I figgered it all out,
An' 'twas this way, jest about:
Bill's a-feelin' bad fer me,
Like as not, an' likely he
Thinks how bad I feel bekase
I don't hear f'm him now'days.
Thinks "Bet Jake calls me a beast—
Pore ol' cuss, all 'lone, back east!"

Yit I'll bet 'at he don't feel
Very bad, nor miss a meal
'Cause he don't git word f'm me—
Jest 'is conscience hurts, ye see.
Then I put m' ink an' pen
An' m' paper back again.
Then I says: "Bill's conscience kin
Tell him when t' write agin."

LOVELY WOMAN'S WAY

How dainty are the hammers that the wily women wield
When speaking of a sister whom ostensibly they'd
shield!

They say: "Poor Nellie! It's a shame! To think that
just because

She's lost her once-high standing by transgressing social
laws

She's shelved for the remainder of her lonely little life
And never can become a self-respecting fellow's wife!"

Sometimes they say it this way, with a smile 'twould
draw the bees:

"I think she's just a darling—and, oh, my! The life of
ease

She might have been enjoying if her husband hadn't
found

That other fellow loved her, and released the tie that
bound!

And really, she is not so bad—I see her every day,
And she's a whole lot better than the spiteful gossips
say."

Or: "I just dote on Mabel, and I often dine with her,
Though all the time I am scared to death to think what
might occur!

She does the very craziest things—I'm really scared to
know!—

She goes with lots of chaps with whom you'd never see
me go!"

How dainty are the sledges that the wily women wield,
When whacking at their sisters whom ostensibly they'd
shield!

WAITING

On summer Saturday's long afternoon
I used to climb, barefoot, one thronelike knoll,
Soliloquizing: "Father's coming soon."

The gray pike billowed eastward like a scroll
And vanished in the apex of a hill

One world-long mile away; around me played
The shifting sunbeams—magically still,
Tiptoeing from each ever-lengthening shade.

I knew that when he crept into my ken

Above the hillbrink I should know the span—
White-stockinged bay, head-tossing gray; and then
The strong familiar figure of the man.

I'd know them—know them! Leaping with their joy

My swift feet from my cairn would take me down—
A care-free, zephyr-hearted, eager boy,
To welcome home my father from the town.

Once on a time he went away again;

Perhaps the sun shone, but we could not see.
I have not climbed that little knoll since then,
For Father is not coming home to me.

Somewhere he waits upon a sun-kissed hill

And softly says: "My boy is coming soon."
He'll know me from afar—I know he will!—

When, world-tired, I trudge home, some afternoon.

MY PIPE IS OUT

(Lay of the drained-out writer.)

My pipe is out; the World—my 'baccy pouch—
Is flabby-flanked and empty to the touch.
I shake it till its lank sides sag and slouch,
Yet all it yields me doesn't count for much.

At length, its dustings settled in the bowl,
I seek my match-box (that's my brain) to find
A germ of genius' blaze with which my soul
May fire the fruits of gropings patient, blind.

No match is there; the last one I had struck
To boil the pot of hunger in my home—
To kindle torches of dissembled pluck
And guide some brother's footsteps as they roam.

My pipe is out; I puff at it in vain—
No taste or warmth—no winking glow I see!
Whence, then, the longed-for solace for my pain
That's mocking at the helplessness of me?

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If I should die to-night
And you should come to my cold corpse and say,
Weeping and heartsick o'er my lifeless clay—
If I should die to-night
And you should come in deepest grief and woe
And say, "Here's that ten dollars that I owe"—
I might arise in my large white cravat
And say, "What's that."

If I should die to-night
And you should come to my cold corpse and kneel,
Clasping my bier to show the grief you feel—
I say, if I should die to-night
And you should come to me, and there and then
Just even hint 'bout paying me that ten,
I might arise the while;
But I'd drop dead again.

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